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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 003953

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/25/2025

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SUBJECT: USNAVEUR ADM ULRICH DISCUSSES BLACK SEA, IRAQ AND BILATERAL ISSUES IN ANKARA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: During introductory calls as USNAVEUR and Joint Forces Command Naples commander, ADM Ulrich won Turkish Navy's agreement to hold consultations on information sharing between the Turks' Black Sea Harmony (BSH) operation and Allied Maritime Component Command Naples sometime before August. The Admiral also alerted Turkish military leaders that the US Navy would be sending ships into the Black Sea several times a year, and that they would welcome the opportunity to work with the Turks while there. The Turks requested that ADM Ulrich encourage the Bulgarians and Romanians to cooperate in tracking suspicious ships that enter their territorial waters after being shadowed by the Turkish Navy. ADM Ornek announced that Turkey would begin a BSH-like operation in the eastern Mediterranean given the steady reduction of OAE coverage of the area over the last year and the requirement to protect increased ship traffic after the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil reaches the terminal in Ceyhan. DCHOD General Basbug informed the Admiral that Turkey was considering contributing trainers in addition to the five staff personnel already committed to the NATO Training Mission - Iraq. GEN Ozkok asked for US assistance with the identification and safe destruction of IEDs. End Summary.

2. (U) Admiral H.G. Ulrich made initial calls as Commander, US Naval Forces Europe and Commander, Joint Forces Command Naples on Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) General Hilmi Ozkok, Deputy Chief General Ilker Basbug and Turkish Naval Forces Commander Admiral Ozlem Ornek on June 29. The Turks congratulated ADM Ulrich on his recent appointment to his commands during the three cordial meetings.

Black Sea

3. (C) ADM Ulrich explained to GEN Ozkok and ADM Ornek that Operation Active Endeavor needed better information on what is happening in the Black Sea. He proposed that a team led by a flag officer from TNFC visit CCMAR Naples to discuss what information OAE collects, how this data is processed, disseminated and used. This would permit Turkey to then provide better, more timely information collected by Turkey's OAE-like Operation Black Sea Harmony. With ADM Ornek, he expressed the hope this could be done before Ornek's retirement (in August). GEN Ozkok noted Russian sensitivities regarding the Black Sea, but did not see a problem in talking. Ornek was less guarded, saying "we will do it."

4. (C) As the USNAVEUR commander, ADM Ulrich explained, the US Navy would continue its practice of sending vessels to work in the Black Sea, probably two or three times per year. With Ornek, he recalled that C6F Commander VADM Stufflebeem had proposed to Ornek that the two USN vessels going to the Black Sea in July exercise with the Turkish Navy both before and during their Black Sea deployment. In more general terms, whenever USN vessels are in the Black Sea, ADM Ulrich wanted them to work with Turkey in ways that assist Turkey's ongoing operations there. Ornek lamented the lead time was too short to plan as ambitious an exercise as proposed by VADM Stufflebeem, but his staff was working on an alternative, a large PASSEX in the Aegean involving two frigates, two fast patrol boats, a submarine and two aircraft sorties. NAVATT expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm TNFC staff have demonstrated for working with the US Navy.

5. (C) Both Bulgaria and Romania have requested naval training from the US, and USNAVEUR would welcome Turkey's advice on what training would be most useful. Ornek initially replied, "all kinds." ADM Ulrich said he wanted to have bilateral consultations in advance on what would be most useful to provide to the two new NATO members. Ornek agreed that the Turkish Navy understood their neighbors' deficiencies given that the Turkish Navy has two or three exercises per year with each of the two countries, plus the experience of semiannual BLACKSEAFOR activations.

6. (C) In addition to training, RADM Gurdeniz hoped that ADM Ulrich would encourage the Romanians and Bulgarians to

utilize the information provided by Turkey to shadow suspicious vessels and report on their activities when these ships enter territorial waters. Turkey, through BSH, follows these vessels, but cannot do so in other countries' territorial waters. Despite excellent cooperation among littoral countries' coast guards, Bulgaria and Romania do not take any action regarding vessels reported to them by Turkey. ADM Ulrich thought developing better information through the talks between TNFC and CCMAR Naples would help, and he agreed to raise the matter when he visited Bucharest and Sofia.

Black Sea Harmony South

17. (C) Ornek informed ADM Ulrich that Turkey was planning a national operation in the eastern Mediterranean similar to Black Sea Harmony. He was unhappy that over the past six to twelve months the force devoted to Operation Active Endeavor had diminished, leaving holes in the area. In September, oil would begin reaching the port of Ceyhan from the Caspian (via BTC pipeline), and the resulting increase in traffic must be protected. He recalled in the past working with DEA to intercept drug shipments in the region that would have been used to finance terrorism. When OAE operated there, this threat was deterred, but with its departure he feared criminal activity would return. Therefore, Turkey would conduct its own OAE-like operation beginning in July, continuing indefinitely, and would coordinate with OAE. As with BSH, Turkey would pass information collected on suspicious vessels to NATO. ADM Ulrich noted this made the need for talks on information requirements more pressing.

Iraq/NTM-I Trainers

18. (C) Deputy TGS Chief GEN Basbug discussed other regional issues with ADM Ulrich. Basbug noted the Turkey had increased its personnel on the NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I) staff from three to five recently. He said TGS also "may consider sending trainers" to Baghdad. He recalled how for the past two years Turkey had made numerous proposals to train Iraqis in Turkey. Two months earlier, at NTM-I's request, Turkey developed a proposal to receive two groups of 15 officers for training and submitted it to SHAPE. There has been no response, he said. Recently, however, two Iraqi officers arrived for training at Ankara's PfP Training Center. ADM Ulrich responded that it was understandable that Iraq would be reluctant to take personnel out of the fight to send them abroad for training. He and Basbug agreed that training was nonetheless essential for success, with Basbug adding a second requirement -- "efficient government."

Bilateral Issues

19. (S/NF) On bilateral issues:

-- ADM Ulrich proposed increasing the number of medium-term (2-3 month) exchanges, putting officers and senior enlisted personnel on each others' ships. Besides affording the opportunity to share skills and experience, this would strengthen Navy-Navy relations as personnel on both sides came to understand the other side better.

-- NAVATT expressed appreciation for Turkish support on force protection for ship visits. Ornek approved of what he perceived as an increased frequency of visits. Basbug thought there were not enough ship visits. ADM Ulrich said his intention was for USN ships to call at Turkish ports more often.

-- ADM Ulrich thanked GEN Ozkok for cooperation on examining the Syrian SCUD that landed in Turkey earlier in the month.

-- CDA noted that the cargo hub at Incirlik was working well and expressed gratitude for Turkey's support of that operation.

-- GEN Ozkok thought much of the intelligence the US was sharing on the PKK was "too general." What Turkey truly appreciated was "timely, practical" (read: actionable) intelligence.

-- GEN Ozkok noted that, with plenty of explosives in Iraq in "unauthorized hands," IEDs were showing up more in Turkey. Most have been radio detonated, but there have also been wire and pressure triggered devices found. He asked for US assistance in detecting and disposing of these devices. ODC-T Chief MajGen Sutton recalled that this subject was discussed during GEN Basbug's meeting with VCJCS Gen Pace. ADM Ulrich and GEN Ozkok thought a team from Joint Staff should visit Ankara ASAP to continue the discussion.

Comment: Removing Irritants

¶10. (C) ADM Ulrich's proposals to improve Turkey's cooperation with NATO and the US in the Black Sea could go a long way in removing this irritant from our bilateral relations. The test will be whether the Turks follow through. We believe there is a good chance that they will. Turkey's new national operation in the eastern Med makes sense given the increased tanker traffic that will come as BTC comes on line and as more Iraqi crude is pumped through the northern pipeline (which also terminates in Ceyhan). However, this operation could increase Turkish naval activity near Cyprus, potentially causing a reaction there. Finally, Ozkok's reiteration of the request Basbug made in Washington in early June underscores the seriousness with which the Turks view the threat from IEDs. We encourage the Joint Staff to respond to the Turkish request for information as soon as possible. End comment.

Participants

¶11. (U) The Admiral was accompanied by the CDA, JFC-N POLAD Amb Dean Curran, ODC-T Chief MajGen Peter Sutton, NAVATT CAPT Devon Goldsmith, USNAVEUR Deputy EA CDR John Rinko, Flag Aide LCDR Craig Mattingly, and PolMilCouns. JFC Naples Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations MG Emin Alpman participated in all three meetings; TGS/J5 LTG Aydogan Babaoglu sat in the TGS meetings; and RADM(UH) Nusret Guner (TNFC/N3) and RADM(LH) Cem Gurdeniz (TNFC/N5 Strategy and Agreements Director) participated in the meeting with ADM Ornek.

¶12. (U) USNAVEUR cleared this cable.
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